reports they were employed by a local contractor to construct a podium for a political rally. The High Commission of India in Dhaka immediately sought consular access. The Government of Bangladesh has also been requested to provide detailed information regarding their apprehension and the charges brought against them and to expedite their release and repatriation.

(b) and (c) According to available information, 738 Indian nationals were in Bangladeshi jails as on January 2004. Many of them are charged with violation of Bangladeshi immigration laws. The High Commission of India in Dhaka is in continual contact with the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry and other authorities to secure consular access as well as their early release and repatriation.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Promotion of agro-based Industries

3091. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the need of taking new steps to promote agro-based industries in the rural areas of the country;

(b) if so, the products and schemes that have been launched in the last one year; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) The Government has been promoting agro and rural industries through the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP), Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY), schemes for development of the khadi and coir sectors, etc. During 2004-05, the budgetary allocations for both REGP and PMRY were enhanced as compared with that during 2003-04 and in case of REGP, it has been further enhanced in the budget estimates, 2005-06. Further, in keeping with the declaration in the National Common Minimum Programme and the announcement in the July 2004 budget speech of Finance Minister, the draft of a scheme titled the "Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries" has been circulated for comments of all concerned, prior to approval and implementation during 2005-06.

(c) In view of the reply to parts (a) and (b) above, the question does not arise.

Rural agro industrial economic policy

3092. SHRI N.R. GOVINDRAJAR: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to formulate a rural agro industrial economic policy to lessen the dependence of villages on the towns; and

(b) if so, the measures taken by Government to process the raw-materials in villages in order to make it into finished goods so that the villages and towns become supplementary to each other?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD): (a) and (b) With a view to creating more employment opportunities in the rural non-farm sector, based on the use of local raw materials and skills, the Government has been promoting agro and rural industries through the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP), Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY), schemes for development of the khadi and coir sectors, etc. The REGP is being implemented through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and banks in the rural areas and small towns with population up to 20,000. Similarly, PMRY is being implemented through the District Industries Centres (DICs) of the State/Union Territories (UTs) and banks in rural areas as well as urban areas. The targets for creation of additional employment during 2005-06 are 5.5 lakh under the REGP and 3.75 lakh under PMRY. The target of additional employment generation in the coir sector during 2005-06 is 0.20 lakh.

The units set up under the REGP and PMRY as well as those in the khadi and coir sectors mostly use local raw materials. This leads to value addition in local raw materials and marketing of the products in villages and towns, thus helping in promoting supplementarity of rural and urban areas.

Modernisation of traditional industries

3093. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated programmes for regeneration and modernization of traditional industries; and